

From: Warren Hack
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/19/01 9:44am
Subject: Comments on Proposed Settlement

I work for a contractor on a NASA budgetted mission, specifically the Hubble Space Telescope project, as a Sr. Software Systems Engineer. I do not have any commercial stake in PC software, but rather develop software for scientific use on a variety of computer platforms, including PCs. I also have professional experience selling and servicing PCs. Therefore, as a professional in the software industry, the proposed settlement with Microsoft would firmly entrench the monopolistic policies of Microsoft as the norm for the industry.

This settlement does nothing to address the true problems that Microsoft was found guilty of in court: that they use Windows as a platform to dominate the PC with their software in lieu of anyone's software. There are no sanctions in this settlement to keep them from buying out one promising company working on some software, 'bundling it' with Windows and overwhelming all the desktops with their version when other companies are making better versions. This practice formed the basis for the suit against Microsoft in the first place, as that was how Microsoft's Internet Explorer came to be so ubiquitous despite it being inferior to Netscape. They have also done the same with screen savers (remember After Dark, the once standard for screen savers), media players (how much longer will RealPlayer last thanks to you?), backup software (remember Colorado Systems), and many other programs that Windows has 'bundled' with the OS. Thanks to you no other software companies will have much of a chance of success. As new applications develop outside of Microsoft, they will simply do as they have always done: buy whichever company they can developing that type of application (regardless of the software's actual quality), 'bundle it' with Windows and swamp every desktop with their version before the other companies can even establish their software in the marketplace.

None of those programs, I do repeat NONE of them, affect the core functionality of the operating system; they only serve to pad Microsoft's bank accounts at the expense of others through the use of monopolistic practices as defined in the court of law. The proposed settlement went out of its way to leave these practices in-tact, and therefore, preserve the very basis of their monopolistic trade. After getting such a resounding conviction, I wouldn't be surprised to hear your budget's have been supplemented by Microsoft given the settlement you proposed. That opinion reflects the perception this settlement gives to the public, and especially to those of us who work professionally with PCs and software development. I only hope that your department will review this settlement with the attorney general's that are holding out and seek a stronger settlement with them.

Warren Hack

3411 Abbie Place
Baltimore, MD 21244

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed are mine alone and should not be taken
as a statement of my employer's opinions.